THE THING WE CALL ECONOMY

By HELENA SMITH DAYTON

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MISS ELLA TIBBETS, after a week's visit in New York, has returned home convinced that New York folk are penny wise and pound foolish. With her own eyes she saw a woman with three servants doing her own washing. With her own ears she heard a woman who lived in a perfectly miserable place talk about her plans for an expensive trip to Europe next summer.

Of course, Miss Tibbets had heard that Mary Jones had "married well" in New York, and it was with some trepidation that she went to make a call. One never can tell how these "old friends" may have changed. The house was imposing, and at the curb on the driver's seat of a limousine a bored chauffeur was feeding chocolate to a toy dog. A butler opened the door. A black-gowned maid was flitting up the stairs.

In a few moments it was the maid who returned to pilot her to the floor above. In the upper hall Mary Jones herself rushed out with enthusiastic greetings. But even more cozily reassuring than the hostess's cordiality was her appearance. She had on an old, faded cotton dress, with the sleeves cut out. Dragging Miss Tibbets through a doorway she carefully closed the door. Then she turned a slightly embarrassed grin on her old friend from home.

"Say, Ella, would you mind if I finish a little washing and ironing I'm doing? We can talk just the same"——

"Washing and ironing?" gasped Mrs. Tibbets. "Of course, not—but—why"—— She stared around the luxurious room.

"You see, I don't want the servants to see it, so I must finish it up." Mary threw open a door. It disclosed a large pink tiled bathroom. At the moment it looked like a miniature laundry. A toy washboard was propped against the bathtub, a small folding ironing table and electric flatiron figured in the equipment and on a white enameled bench were newly pressed piles of lingerie, stockings and handkerchiefs.

"Mary Jones! Do you mean to tell me you do your own washing with all the help you have in the house?" demanded the visitor.

"Of course, I send out the large pieces," was the explanation. "You see, besides the chauffeur we have only the houseman and the cook—and they won't wash—so there you are!"

"But that is three servants," insisted Miss Tibbets. "Why, at home when any one keeps only one girl she does the washing if she doesn't do anything else."

"Oh, yes, at home," agreed Mary Jones. "Of course, I do these things for several reasons. A laundry is hard on fine things and you also lose them. And it really is surprising how much I saved doing it myself. You see, I pay myself regular rates for every piece, and last month I made enough to buy a feather fan which otherwise I couldn't have afforded."

The feather fan almost knocked Miss Tibbets over, but when she had recovered she tried to reason with Mary. "But you could cut out one of those fancy servants and save enough for a good strong girl to do your washing and have a lot of money left if you have to economize."

"I'm not economizing for the sake of economy, but so I can be extravagant in the ways I like to be."

The caller was still puzzling over this when a young woman named Daisy Something breezed in. The laundry was closed for the day, the hostess dressed quickly in a neat but inexpensive gown and they were drinking tea when the hostess said reprovingly:

"Oh, Daisy, you extravagant girl, paying $600 for your new coat. Of course, it is lovely"——

"But, Marie, I am not extravagant," protested Daisy. "It is because I am so good a manager that could afford the one thing I really wanted this winter. Look at those shoes. I paid a man $1.50 to mend them and I'll get another winter out of them."

No wonder Miss Ella Tibbets left town a bit confused about such discrepancies between petty economies and wild expenditures.

The anti-taxi man will march a girl blocks in the rain in her silver sandals

"Save on dull, uninteresting necessities if one must," says the New Yorkers, "so one may buy the things the imagination craves."

There are all sorts of combinations that may be worked in New York for making both ends meet with a restricted income and a determination to get the particular things one wants. To save where it doesn't show or hurt, to spend where it pleases one's pride or inclination. Conditions peculiar to the city make it possible.

In a smaller community there are set standards of living to which persons of varying incomes conform. Money must be spread more or less evenly over everything. No use making a grand splurge in one direction when only too obvious are retrenchments in another. Main Street knows what everybody can or can not afford. To "afford" doesn't mean one cannot buy and pay for the cherished object, but it does mean that that object is not appropriate to the rest of one's background. The very house lived in is a classification. Wouldn't folks criticize Mrs. Jim Peck if she bought that limousine she dreams about? Imagine it standing before her place of residence, which happens to be "rooms" over the feed and grain store. She and Jim might prefer to live there, but when the price of a limousine, her heart's desire, rolls up, that money must be put into a more pretentious dwelling.

Live where you like and how you like in New York; there are no neighbors to check up on you.

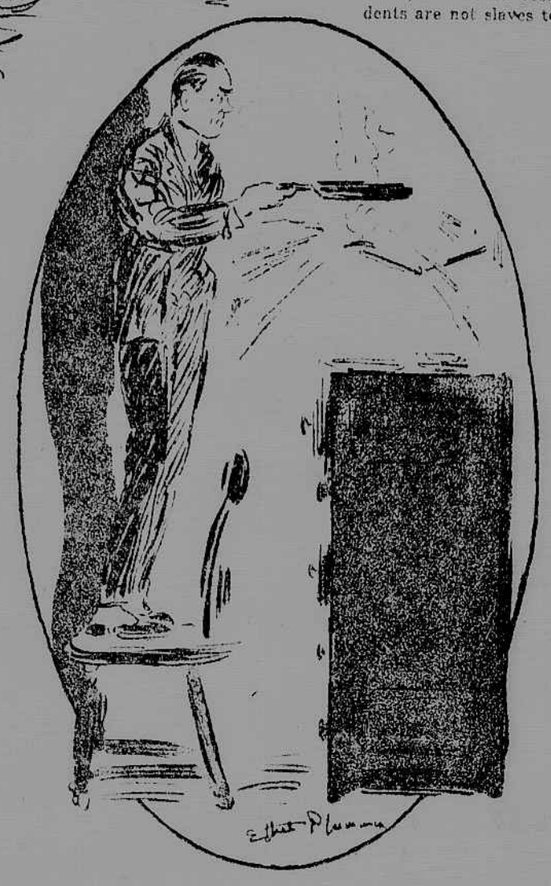
Quite a contrast to Mary Jones, who happened to have a penchant for decorative servants and feather fans, and who went light on expensive clothes, is Mrs. Wadham Bingley. The Bingleys live in the least expensive apartment in a not expensive apartment house. Though the Bingleys' income equals that of the Joneses, Mrs. Bingley dispenses with servants entirely, with the exception of the woman who comes to wash and iron. Mrs. Bingley "goes in" for expensive clothes and jewels. She likes to dine in fashionable restaurants, where she and her husband give give all their dinner parties. At the theaters the Bingleys always have a box. Costs a lot, of course, but think what they save in home expenses.

Then take that perfectly charming Mrs. Chester Pelican. To her friends her place of residence is a mere phone number. For all they know she may live in a tree in Central Park.

"Give me a ring—soon. Plaza umpty-umpty-um," she says on parting from an acquaintance at a tea or art exhibit. "Better write it down, as we're not in the book. Yes, Plaza umpty-umpty-um. You must have tea with me some day next week. I know the most charming new place and I want to take you there. I won't ask you to come up to our place, it's such a wretched, poky little apartment. You know, we're just camping out this winter, and it was the best we could do, we came in from the country so late. And, of course, we go away so early in the spring. Our place in the country is a darling; wish you could run up for a week-end next summer. The roses, my dear; such roses! You should come in June."

The Pelicans have a very popular mania for spending their money on "the little place in the country." To make it possible they don't mind hibernating in their two dingy back rooms in an unimproved old house. Nobody knows and nobody cares. They belong to clubs where one may address mail to them if one forgets Plaza-umpty-umpty-um.

No, New York residents are not slaves to the fashionable locality idea. It is personality, not "the large white Colonial house with the columns," that gets one by in the big democratic city.



You can fry your eggs over a gas jet in the morning—and give a dinner at the Ritz in the evening

For instance, a family from the South came to live in New York. They leased a very expensive apartment on Riverside Drive, at least the man did before his wife and children came on.

"What did you blow so much on rent for?" demanded an old friend, who knew his financial status. "Why, Bill, you must be crazy."

Bill looked surprised. "But we wanted to get in right from the start—meet the right people and so forth. Owe it to our girls. Everybody down home assumed, of course, we would live on Riverside Drive or Fifth Avenue. We live on the best residence street in our home city and we don't want anything second class in New York."

Since the lease was already signed Bill's friend held his peace. If Bill thought that picking out an expensive place to live meant a short cut to "meeting our best people" he would be disillusioned soon enough. When the friend, after several months' absence from New York, looked up Bill one of the first questions he asked was if the slice of palace on Riverside Drive had got him all he hoped it would.

"Well," confessed Bill, "I know the six elevator operators, the doorman and before the year's up I'll know the superintendent of the building well enough to chat with him about the weather. He called me by my name this morning when I rode down in the elevator with him. Oh, of course, we have made friends in New York—fine people they are, too. But they are scattered all over the place from Harlem to Montclair. When our lease expires you bet we are going to get a cheaper place. Probably in one of those swell slums. I've got the idea now.

"In New York," he explained, as if he were the Columbus that discovered it, "you can live in an empty hogshead down on the water front a la Huckleberry Finn and no questions asked if you issue forth into society personally presentable. You can fry your egg over the gas jet in the morning and give a dinner at the Ritz in the evening, but it took me a while to learn the trick."

Supposing one desires to live in what would seem an "impossible" place and at the same time dispense good old-fashioned hospitality by entertaining friends "at home." It is quite the simplest thing in the world. All that is needed is "atmosphere." The hostess who can produce an atmosphere needn't be afraid to entertain royalty. There's more in it, of course, than candles, paisley shawls, old furniture, quaint tea things and saltines with parmesan cheese sprinkled with paprika and popped into a hot oven a moment, but these items help.

Of course, there are people who cannot get away with this sort of background. They can't create illusions for themselves or others. They must lean against a solid fact to prop up their poise. For them a favorite alternative to a roomy, picturesque garret is a tiny room in an imposing hotel. To afford this glory of address the grand economy becomes food. These dwellers in palaces become experts in values at the dairy lunch, automats, soda fountains and cheap table d'hotes.

How to seem always to be dashing about to engagements in taxicabs on a subway pocketbook can be managed. Suppose a person wanted to go from West 199th Street to a party in the East Thirties. Pop into the nearest subway station and ride to a station nearest the journey's end. Take a taxi across town and arrive in style. The taxi ride, short as it is, restores poise and that comfortable feeling of affluence.

The thrifty soul who demi-taxies strikes a balance between the person whose greatest extravagance is the taxi habit, no matter how great the distance, and the individual who would rather pluck out an eye than have that eye dwell approvingly upon a meter when it is jumping at his expense.

The taxi prodigal will assure you that it is economy to use them; saves wear and tear on your nerves, saves time, and, if it is raining, saves clothes. "Better a dollar or so for fare than to ruin a $50 suit. I'd rather make it up in some other way. Why, look, if I still had my car think how much more it would cost to run it; more in one week than I spend on taxis in a month."

"But," argues the man-afraid-of-a-meter, "why throw away all that money when a streetcar, subway, elevated or bus will take you anywhere you want to go? I'm a good spender and don't mind paying for anything I want, but the one thing I draw the line on is wasting money on taxicabs."

This anti-taxi man will march a girl blocks in the rain in her silver sandals after an evening's outing and plunge her through wild tangles of traffic on to a crowded streetcar with smiling complacency, for did he not earlier in the evening, when he called for her, present her with a $10 box of chocolates and a $5 bunch of violets? And didn't the tickets for that particular show cost $5.50 each? Then, what was her grouch about going home?

More men than women seem to have the taxi complex. On the other hand, one runs across many women with an antipathy for telephone charges. A certain well-to-do widow for instance, bought a house in the suburbs. She lived alone with one servant. To the dismay of her married sons and daughters she refused to have a telephone installed. She endured all sorts of inconveniences herself and made it very difficult for her solicitous children and friends to keep in touch with her. She looked upon a phone as a silly expense when she considered how many peanuts that amount a month would buy. Yes, peanuts. She considered peanuts her pet extravagance and liked to have heaps of them around the house, and it pleased her to think she earned them by eliminating the telephone.

No woman can understand why her husband will cheerfully pay $100 for a suit of clothes and howl to high heaven because the price of the best hats went over $5. Nor can a man figure out why his wife will pay $40 for a hat and always go hunting up obscure cheap little tailors for a suit.

Men fuss about light bills and go about turning off switches; women like to have dozens of bulbs going, shrouded dimly. One woman who spends reckless sums on her home equipment has just one aversion—buying dish toweling. Many people will think nothing of signing a large check for anything, but hesitate on buying any trifle with the change in their purse. It is a well known fact among exclusive dressmakers, milliners, etc., that many very rich men will give their wives unlimited credit and almost a beggarly allowance. Arrangements between customer and shopkeepers have been made for overcharges on the bills sent and the difference in cash rebated to madam. This is probably the type of millionaire who saves bits of string, spending valuable moments unknotting them and winding them into neat little wheels.

An elderly relative sent Bettina a check with instructions to buy a pair of sensible shoes, woolen stockings and a warm coat, all of which the fair creature needed badly. Bettina bought a glorious negligee.

"A wise investment," explained Bettina. "Because that negligee inspired me to paint the best thing I ever did in my life, and I sold it for twice what the negligee cost."

"And so you got the woolen stockings and things after all?" she was asked.

"Oh, no; not at all. It was just enough to buy the most amusing evening gown, which will probably inspire me to another masterpiece. If there's enough left over from the sale of that after I've bought some more things that I want—perhaps." Bettina shrugged her shoulders, "perhaps I'll get the things that I need."

Marie Antoinette would not have been so much misunderstood perhaps had she lived in New York, where, if one cannot get bread, they do eat cake.

And doubtless Cinderella would have loved this magic, fairy godmother city, where, although our fine coaches of the moment may turn into pumpkins and our fiery steeds into mice, if too closely examined, yet this is one place at least in the world where on the street—or even at a ball—one can't tell a poor little rich girl from a rich little poor girl.

HOLDUPS WITH AN UNLOADED GUN

(Continued from page one)

Morse afterward said, "the moment I heard his hollow voice."

Bolton at that time, fifty-four years old, five feet eight inches in height, carried himself erect as a soldier and had the easy movements of a man whose every muscle was in vigorous use. He wore a suit of the pepper-and-salt kind once quite popular. The hat was an expensive derby and he carried a light cane. A sweeping gray mustache and a broad imperial added to his military appearance. Keen and piercing blue eyes indicated a long and accurate vision. A naturally quiet, dignified and self-possessed manner betokened the assured man of the world.

The questions Morse and Hume flung at him did not shake his poise.

"I do not know either of you," he said, "and I do not understand how my personal business concerns you."

Morse, remembering the bloody way bill and observing that the right hand of Bolton was in the process of healing from a wound, abruptly asked:

"How did you receive that wound?"

Bolton never faltered. "It is none of your business, but I will tell you. I struck it on the rail at Reno," he replied, maintaining a fine pretense of indignation.

"No, you didn't," retorted Morse; "you got it when you broke open the Wells-Fargo box at a place a good distance from Reno."

Black Bart realized that the trap had been sprung and that his best course was silence. Even when Morse found other handkerchiefs that had just been returned to his room bearing the damning "FOX7" he treated the evidence with seeming lightness.

"I am certainly not the only man with this laundry mark on his clothes," he protested.

He was then shown the handkerchief found on the scene of the robbery. "Maybe this will aid your memory," Morse ironically remarked. "It was found where you dropped it after robbing the Sonora stage."

"What!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Do you take me for a stage robber? This is the first time my character has been brought into question."

Morse and Hume felt that they had good evidence, but not convicting evidence, and they set about obtaining a confession. Using the Bible found in his room as a pivot, the detectives rang all the changes on this they could think of, but Black Bart gave no indication that he was Boles or that remorse was gnawing at his vitals. He calmly informed them that they and the Wells-Fargo company would have to face heavy suits for damages when he was freed.

Their next move was to take him to San Andreas, the county seat of Calaveras, where he would have to be tried, in the hope of obtaining identification evidence. All the way there, by rail and stage, they tried to trip him into an incriminating admission and urged him to confess.

Black Bart, playing for time, appeared to be in jovial mood, varying his jokes and reminiscences of army life with reminders of the suits for damages he soon would be able to file. His reminiscences proved that he had fought throughout the Civil War.

Morse continually returned to the subject of confession. It was a duel of wills. The detective dogged, determined, threatening Black Bart mentally alert, quick to avoid every thrust of his opponent, but fighting on the defensive. The man in jeopardy began to weaken. He asked casually, as if the thought had just come to him:

"What would happen to the man who did commit this robbery if he confessed?"

A confession, Morse explained, would save the government and county a great deal of money and would incline the officials to be lenient.

Black Bart confessed, but before doing so made terms relating to his sentence and an early pardon. He told Morse and Hume that he kept up a show of mining at his place far up in the mountains and used it as a retreat after every robbery. On selecting a spot for the actual stage hold-up he made camp near by, from which he sallied forth and to which he returned after the robbery. In all the years of his absence he sent regular remittances to his wife, and she never knew until his capture that the money that came during the last seven years was stolen.

The San Francisco residence had to be maintained, as the big city was the only place where he could dispose of gold dust and amalgam year after year with safety to himself. He used an unloaded gun, because he had determined before beginning his career as a highwayman that he would never kill or injure man or woman. He kept faith with himself.

Hume's jaw dropped when Bolton told about the unloaded gun. However, he joined in the laugh against him, for he had fallen under the spell of Bolton's magnetism. So had Morse and every other person who had come to know Bolton after he had thrown off the restraint and discarded the secrecy which his seven years of brigandage had imposed upon him. That was one of the impelling causes for the acceptance of his terms.

The terms as finally settled were a sentence of seven years' imprisonment at the state penitentiary and a pardon at the end of the second year. Hume agreed that he would obtain the sanction of the principal men in the Wells-Fargo company, and this arrangement was carried out to the letter. Morse asked that the news of the sentence be suppressed for a day, as he had promised a friend on "The San Francisco Call" a "scoop" on it. This friend, by the way, was with him on his long hunt for Tiburcio Vasquez, the bandit. Black Bart, therefore, was held incomunicado in the San Francisco jail on his way to the penitentiary pending the ratification to him personally of the agreement on sentence and pardon.

I was then working on "The San Francisco Examiner," the cubbiest of cub reporters. On the night of Black Bart's arrival I was substituting for the regular police reporter while that lordly gentleman took his dinner. I noticed the unusual speed with which a small party hurried through the main prison, past the booking desk and through the gate leading to the secret cells. One man in the party, wearing a pepper-and-salt suit, attracted my notice, but I would have paid no further attention to the incident, supposing it was an inspection tour of some kind, had not the party shortly returned without the man in the pepper-and-salt suit. Being a cub reporter, I scented a mystery and determined to solve it.

At 6 o'clock the policemen on duty in the prison left and the night force came on. In the brief interval I slipped through the gate to the secret cells. Within a minute I located the man in the pepper-and-salt suit. The door of his cell was open and he sat inside smoking a cigar. Not knowing who he was, his crime or his destination, I threw all my cards on the table faces up, metaphorically speaking, and won.

Black Bart was lonesome. The reserve of years had given way and he hungered for human companionship. He was too good a sport to seek sympathy, and I was too busy taking notes to bestow it. He held me for two hours, telling much that is here revealed for the first time, giving me a story that made Morse's account in "The Call" look like a tallow dip beside a large arc light, and asking me to withhold certain revelations, which I have done.

Notwithstanding all of Black Bart's temporary success as a highwayman and the glamour of it, it did not pay. I know, because of what he told me and because I knew the contents of letters that Mary Boles wrote to him in prison at San Quentin and to the men who honorably kept their word to shorten his stay there. When he passed out of the prison gate she was there to meet him in love and forgiveness.

The men he had robbed and had been fair with him gave him employment on their stages as a "shotgun messenger." His work was to protect the stages from hold-ups. He saved money and bought a ranch, where he abode in peace and quiet until he died. His wife is now dead, but the daughter still lives on the ranch.

AN ALIBI FOR PLAGIARISTS

"I SEE that the term 'suggested by' is creeping into the literature of the day more or less," said a veteran writer. "The motion picture people seem to be making particularly good use of it. One reads of plays 'suggested by' stories of well known writers. Probably the authors who have been given credit, after viewing the screen products, are inclined to wonder just when and where any suggestion of theirs came in. The man who has written a quiet story, entitled 'His Mother's Knitting,' and sees it advertised as suggesting a thriller, entitled 'An Inheritance of Sin,' reels dizzily away from the three-sheet poster with a dim idea that perhaps he is going insane.

"But the 'suggested by' proposition has caught on big—there's no doubt about that. One finds out that Charles Dickens, all unknown to himself, has suggested the basis of a pie-destroying farce. Or perhaps some poet writes a line, inoffensive enough in itself, which suggests a five-reel drama to a tireless continuity writer.

"It's easy to see where the thing can be carried too far. When we get to reading, for instance, of a three-act play by Harold Witherby, suggested by a novel by Clarence Dawkins, suggested by a short story by Marie du Zinge, suggested by a poem by Albertus Agitato, suggested by an epigram tossed off by Bill Birdseye, the well known cynic who gives the required note of pessimism to the comic weeklies, the public is bound to feel that matters are overdone. I'm an old-fashioned writer myself. I haven't written a thing as yet that has been 'suggested by' something else—that is, outside the realm of subconscious suggestion, which you never advertise. I'll have to hurry and read something that will suggest something else to me and get into print with the result or I'll be dubbed hopelessly behind the times."